



*Play for grown people is recreation – the renewal of
life. For children, it
is growth, the gaining of life.*

~Joseph Lee, the Father of the American Playground



Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update

Executive Summary

OCTOBER 2007

Acknowledgements

City of Bloomington

Mark Kruzan, Mayor

City Council

Dave Rollo, Council President
Steve Volan, Council Vice President
Tim Mayer, Parliamentarian
Mike Diekhoff, Councilmember
Andy Ruff, Councilmember
David Sabbagh, Councilmember
Susan Sandberg, Councilmember
Chris Sturbaum, Councilmember
Brad Wisler, Councilmember

City of Bloomington, Board of Park Commissioners

Mary Catherine Carmichael, President
Les Coyne, Vice President
John Carter
Joe Hoffmann

City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Advisory Staff

Mick Renneisen, Administrator
Paula McDevitt, Recreation Services Division Director
John Turnbull, Sports Services Division Director
Dave Williams, Operations and Development Division Director
Julie Ramey, Community Relations Manager
Cheryll Elmore, Business/Special Projects Manager
Judy Seigle, Office Manager

Consultant Team

GreenPlay, LLC
Design Concepts
Geowest

For more information about this document, contact GreenPlay, LLC
At: 3050 Industrial Lane, Suite 200, Broomfield, Colorado 80020, Telephone: 303-439-8369 Fax: 303-439-0628
Toll Free: 866-849-9959 Email: info@greenplayllc.com www.greenplayllc.com

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I. Executive Summary

Purpose of this Plan

The Bloomington Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update is intended to help meet the needs of current and future residents by positioning Bloomington to build on the community's unique parks and recreation assets and identify new opportunities. The citizen driven plan establishes a clear direction to guide city staff, advisory committees, and elected officials in their efforts to enhance the community's parks and recreation programs, services and facilities.

Bloomington Parks & Recreation Mission Statement

Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department will provide essential services, facilities, and programs necessary for the positive development and wellbeing of the community through the provision of parks, greenways, trails, and recreational facilities while working in cooperation with other service providers in the community in order to maximize all available resources.

Philosophy and Objectives

The Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department reviews its philosophy and objectives through a comprehensive planning process. This process generally occurs in five year cycles.

Strategic Action Plan

In addition, the Department, with Park Board and public input, compiles a Strategic Action Plan that outlines the allocation of department resources on an annual basis for a period of generally one to three years, or up to five years. The Strategic Action Plan establishes measurable objectives with defined timelines and assigns staff members to be accountable for completing each objective. The Strategic Action Plan serves as a report card to the community, tracking department progress on specified objectives.

Brief History of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department

The City Park Board, responsible for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of city park lands, held its first meeting on December 7, 1921. The Department of Recreation was formed in 1946. It was originally governed by the City Recreation Council, which consisted of the School Board, the Park Board, the Recreation Commission, and seven members at-large. In 1948, the governing body was changed and the Department was sponsored by the Board of Education, and the Board of Recreation. The Department of Parks and Recreation held its first meeting on June 26, 1952, bringing the efforts of the City Park Board and the Department of Recreation into one department. This structure serves the park and recreation needs of the City today.

Parks and Recreation Department Overview

Bloomington Parks and Recreation is a department of the City of Bloomington and receives funding authorized by the Common Council through budget appropriations. Additional funding is provided through fees charged for specific programs and services and through grant funds. Additionally, the Bloomington Parks and Recreation Foundation provides funds through donations and bequests that enhance department programs, services, and

projects. Through these means parks and recreation programs and services are provided and maintained for the citizens of Bloomington.

The Department is known for the quality and variety of its park and recreation services, not only by the community but nationally, as a six time NRPA Gold Medal Finalist and Gold Medal Award winner in 2007. The Department provides an extensive number of services, in comparison to other communities of its size, and impressively does this on a very tight budget.

The Department provides services through three different divisions: Operations and Development, Recreation Services, and Sports Services. Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department (BPRD), as indicated by the community survey results, is recognized as the primary recreation provider in the area. For both youth and adult recreation activities, residents use BPRD activities more than any other provider.

Community Profile

Service Area and Population

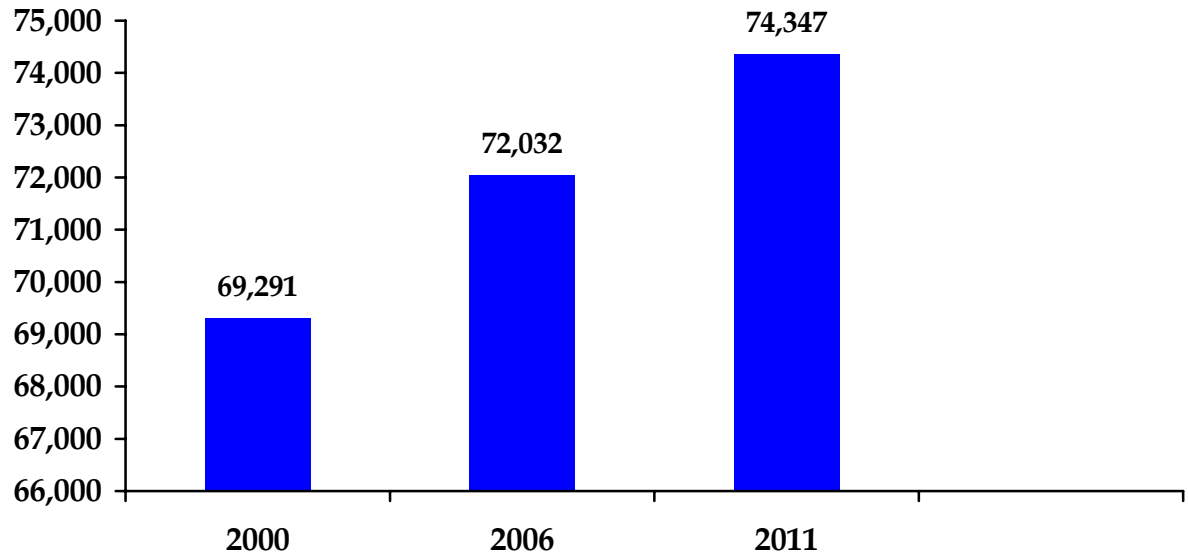
The primary service area for this analysis is Bloomington, Indiana. According to the Bloomington/Monroe County Convention and Visitors Bureau Bloomington, Indiana (population 72,032) is largely known as the home to Indiana University. Nestled in the wooded hills of southern Indiana, Bloomington is a one hour drive from Indianapolis, the State Capital. Bloomington's location and natural beauty make it a likely place for many types of outdoor recreation. Home to the state's largest inland lake, only national forest, and a variety of city and county parks, the Bloomington area provides opportunities for hiking, fishing, boating, biking, golfing, and more. The area is also host to a variety of recreational and cultural programs and events.

All auxiliary information for this report such as population makeup and projections, income, race, educational attainment, age, gender was derived from ESRI Business Information Solutions for Bloomington, Indiana. Current and future population projections were obtained from the ESRI Business Information Solutions.

Population Forecasts

Although one can never know the future with certainty, it is helpful to make assumptions about it for economic reasons. The population of Bloomington is forecasted to experience a slow rate of growth from 72,032 in 2006 to 74,347 in 2011, at a rate of .63% annually. *Error! Reference source not found.* shows population estimates and projected population growth.

Figure 1: Population Growth 2000 to 2011 Projections



Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions

Related Planning Efforts and Integration

The City of Bloomington has undertaken several planning efforts in recent years that have helped inform the planning process for this Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update.

These plans and studies include:

- Citizen Attitude and Interest Survey (April of 2006)
- 50 and Older Citizen Survey (February of 2006)
- City of Bloomington Strategic Action Plan (2003-2007)
- Alternative Transportation & Greenways System Plan (2001)
- Bloomington Parks and Recreation Administrative Policy Manual (2003)

Methodology of this Planning Process

This project has been guided by a project team, made up of city staff and the Board of Park Commissioners. This team provided input to the GreenPlay consulting team throughout the planning process. This collaborative effort creates a plan that fully utilizes the consultant's expertise and incorporates the local knowledge and institutional history that only community members can provide. The project consisted of the following tasks:

Needs Assessment and Public Involvement

- Review of previous planning efforts, city historical information, and two recent statistically valid community interest and opinion surveys.
- Consideration of the profile of the community and demographics, including anticipated population growth.
- Extensive community involvement effort including focus groups, meetings with key stakeholders, community-wide public meetings.
- Identification of alternative providers of recreation services to provide insight regarding the market opportunities in the area for potential new facilities and services.

- Research of trends and statistics related to American lifestyles to help guide the efforts of programming staff.

Level of Service Analysis

- Interviews with staff to provide information about parks and recreation facilities and services, along with insight regarding the current practices and experiences of the City in serving its residents and visitors.
- Analysis addressing recreation, parks, and related services

Inventory

- Inventory of parks and facilities using existing mapping, staff interviews, and on-site visits to verify amenities and assess the condition of the facilities and surrounding areas.

Assessment and Analysis

- Review and assessment of relevant plans
- Organizational SWOT Analysis
- Measurement of the current delivery of service using the GRASP® Level of Service Analysis and allowing for a target level of service to be determined that is both feasible and aligned with the desires of citizens as expressed through the citizen survey. This analysis is also represented graphically in GRASP® Perspectives.
- Exploration of finance and funding mechanisms to support development and sustainability of the system

Recommendations: Goals, Objectives, and Action Plan

- Identification and categorization of recommendations into themes with goals, objectives, and an action plan for implementation.
- Development of an action plan for capital improvements including cost, funding source potentials, and timeframe to support the implementation of the plan.

Timeline for Completing the Master Plan

- Start-up (January 2007)
- Needs Assessment and Public Involvement (February - May 2007)
- Inventory and Assessment of Existing Facilities (January - June 2007)
- Findings Compilation Report (June 2007)
- Standards and Recommendations (March - August 2007)
- Financial Resource Analysis (April - September 2007)
- Recommendations and Action Plans (June - August 2007)
- Final Plan and Presentation (September 2007)

Community Outreach

As part of this planning effort, a complete parks, recreation, open space and trails needs assessment was conducted. Activities included: obtaining community input through focus groups, stakeholders meetings, and community wide public meetings; creating an in-depth profile of demographics of the Oregon City area; and examining national and local recreational trends.

Over 100 community members participated in five citizen focus groups, six stakeholder interviews, and a public forum between February 19th and February 23rd, 2007. Participants represented a wide variety of community interests including park and recreation users, parents of children that participate in city programs, concerned residents, business representatives, partnering organizations, and the Bloomington Park and Recreation Department staff. The consultants facilitated the discussion and led the participants through a series of 20 questions to gain input on a broad range of issues about or affecting the City.

The City of Bloomington conducted a Community Attitude and Interest Survey during November and December of 2006 to help establish priorities for the future development of parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services within the community. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout the City of Bloomington and surrounding Monroe County. The survey was administered by a combination of mail and phone.

Leisure Vision, a survey firm that specializes in parks and recreation, worked with Bloomington city officials in the development of the survey questionnaire. This work allowed the survey to be tailored to issues of strategic importance to effectively plan the future system.

In November 2006, surveys were mailed to a random sample of 2,500 households in the City of Bloomington and Monroe County. Approximately three days after the surveys were mailed each household that received a survey also received an electronic voice message encouraging them to complete the survey. In addition, about two weeks after the surveys were mailed Leisure Vision began contacting households by phone, either to encourage completion of the mailed survey or to administer the survey by phone.

The goal was to obtain a total of, at least, 600 completed surveys. This goal was exceeded, with a total of 611 surveys having been completed. The results of the random sample of 611 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/- 4%.

Key Findings of the Community Attitude and Interest Survey

Parks and Facility Use and Ratings

- Eighty-eight percent of respondent households have used at least one of Bloomington's 21 parks during the past 12 months. Of the 88% of respondents that have visited parks during the past year, 96% rated the physical condition of all the parks they have visited as either excellent (39%) or good (55%).
- Based on the sum of their top three choices, the parks that respondent households have visited most often are: Bryan Park (70%), Cascades Park (39%), and Griffy Lake Nature Park (24%).
- Based on the sum of their top three choices, the facilities that respondent households have used the most are: Clear Creek Trail (29%), Bryan Park Pool (27%), and Bloomington Rail Trail (26%).

- Three of the 17 facilities had at least 50% of respondents rate their condition as excellent: Clear Creek Trail (71%), Community Gardens (52%), and Winslow Sports Park (50%). It should also be noted that all 17 facilities had over 70% of respondents rate them as being either excellent or good.
- Not knowing what is being offered (19%) is the reason preventing the highest percentage of respondent households from using parks, recreation and sports facilities or programs more often. The other most frequently mentioned reasons include: too far from their residence (18%), not knowing the location of the facilities (14%), and the fees were too high (13%).

Programs

- Twenty-nine percent (29%) of respondent households have participated in programs offered by the City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department during the past year, which is equivalent to the national average of 29%.
- Of the 29% of respondents that have participated in Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department programs during the past 12 months, 93% rated the programs as excellent (45%) or good (48%), compared to the national average of 87%.

Community Needs

- From the list of 26 parks and recreation facilities, respondent households felt that the following facilities met their needs 75-100%: adult softball fields (85%), playground equipment (85%), the golf course (82%), and large community parks (79%).
- The top four park and recreation facilities that are rated as only meeting respondent's needs at 50% or less include: indoor fitness and exercise facilities, indoor running/walking track, indoor swimming/leisure pool, and green space and natural areas.
- Based on the sum of their top four choices, the facilities that respondents rated as the most important are: walking and biking trails (51%), small neighborhood parks (28%), nature center and trails (25%), greenspace and natural areas (20%), and large community parks (20%).
- From the list of 23 sports and recreation programs, respondent households felt that the following programs met their needs 75-100%: the Farmers Market (92%), youth sports programs (69%), special events (55%), and adult sports programs (65%).
- The top four sports and recreation programs that are rated as only meeting respondent's needs at 50% or less include adult fitness and wellness programs, special events, water fitness, and nature/environmental programs.
- Based on the sum of their top four choices, the programs that respondents rated as the most important are: Farmers' Market (46%), special events (27%), adult fitness and wellness programs (21%), and nature/environmental programs (16%).

Financial Support

- Respondents indicated they would allocate \$31 out of every \$100 to the improvements/maintenance of existing parks, playgrounds, and recreation facilities. The remaining \$69 were allocated as follows: development of new indoor facilities (\$25), acquisition and development of walking and biking trails (\$21), acquisition of new park land and open space (\$14), construction of new sports fields (\$6), and \$3 to "other."

- Fifty-seven percent (57%) of respondents are either very willing (23%) or somewhat willing (34%) to pay some increase in taxes to fund the types of parks, trails, recreation and sports facilities that are most important to their household.

Conclusions

It is evident that the Bloomington community highly uses and is extremely satisfied with the city's parks. This is illustrated by the fact that 93% of respondents rated the condition of the parks as "good" or "excellent," compared to the national average of 87%. However, it is apparent that the satisfaction levels with the City's indoor facilities do not compare and could be greatly improved. Facilities like Frank Southern Ice Arena, Allison-Jukebox Community Center, Banneker Community Center, Bloomington Adult Community Center and Mills Outdoor Pool had 18-27% rating their condition as "poor." This indicates that the City has opportunities to increase the level of service by making improvements to indoor facilities.

The Bloomington residents are very well informed about the City's parks and recreation programs. For example, 65% learn about activities from the program guide, and 22% from the City website, compared to the national average of 8%.

The community has a strong need for park and recreation facilities, the community's highest needs are for walking and biking trails, small neighborhood parks, nature centers, and green space/natural areas. Those facilities stated as the highest needs are generally being met; it is facilities such as indoor fitness and exercise, indoor running/walking track, indoor lap lanes, and indoor swimming/leisure pool that are not being met.

In regard to recreation programs, the community has a wide range of interests and needs. Those programs for which the community has the highest needs are the Farmers' Market, special events, adult fitness and wellness, and nature/environmental programs. It is interesting to note that the top areas where needs are not being met include adult fitness and wellness, special events, water fitness, and nature/environmental programs.

In developing new facilities, the survey results illustrate that the City should continue to focus on developing neighborhood parks, trails, and indoor recreation facilities, as funds are available. However, as expressed by the survey, it is most important that the City improve and maintain its existing facilities. A majority of residents (57%) are very or somewhat willing to financially support these improvements through an increase of taxes, which should be taken into consideration for future planning and developments.

Areas of Focus for Bloomington

Traditional and Alternative Funding

The City of Bloomington has many aging park and recreation facilities in need of renovations and repairs, and in some cases the City may need to build new facilities. With the recent reductions in the Parks and Recreation Department's budget (\$1.1 million in 2004) there is great need to regain funding allocations and establish new and significant funding sources.

The Department will not be able to initiate another bond process until 2016 and dependency on future grants is unreliable. Trends in recent federal grant awards are primarily for the development of trails, with very little funding allocated for building new facilities or renovating existing ones. Bloomington's needs are to renovate existing and/or consider constructing new indoor facilities.

In addition to regaining traditional funding, it will be important for the Department to actively seek monies from alternative funding sources. The Department will need to continue its efforts to obtain grants, donations, and sponsorships in order to provide for the sustainability of the agency. The City's highest priority for implementing this Master Plan will have to be identifying and obtaining ways to invest in and fund desired and expected quality of life amenities.

Pricing and Cost Recovery

It is important for the Department to develop a philosophy for resource allocation, cost recovery, and resultant pricing and fees that reflect the values of the community and the responsibility the City has to the community. This method is invaluable for making tough resource allocation decisions, and creating pricing and cost recovery strategies. These strategies need to be equitable, defensible, and implementable at all levels, and should be based on the value of the services to the community, not just a comparative evaluation of what has been done before or what others are doing. This philosophy will be very important to providing for the sustainability of the Department.

Increase Partnerships and Collaborations

The Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department has experienced significant budget reductions and due to its current funding cannot be everything to everyone. The Department has done a great job partnering with community organizations and nonprofits to provide services and minimize duplication of efforts. It will be extremely important that the Department continue its philosophy of communication and partnerships with other service providers. Throughout the public input process, it was stressed that the Department should work to compliment other community organizations and fill the gaps where needs are not being met.

It cannot be emphasized enough the value and benefit of existing and potential partnerships to the community. Collaborations within the community between local governmental agencies such as the Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department and School Districts, Universities, private sector, nonprofit organizations, etc. are the most efficient method of delivering quality services. Each entity has strengths and/or niches to offer to the partnership that can be utilized effectively and without duplication.

There is an increasingly successful trend for Park and Recreation Departments to partner with schools on adjacent land so indoor and outdoor amenities can be shared for usage, capital expenditure, operational costs, scheduling, etc. and each partner increases their value and benefits more efficiently. There is also a growing trend for Parks and Recreation Departments to acquire existing facilities that the private sector built and operated but couldn't generate enough income to stay in business. Typically the cost of the acquisition is much less than planning, designing, and building a new facility. BPRD should research

opportunities to implement these trends in the future to increase the Level Of Service within the community. Partnering should continue to be a major focus of the BPRD now and in the future to ensure the quality level of service the community of Bloomington supports and expects.

Capital Improvement Priorities

Focus group participants, staff, and survey respondents all shared major concerns about the age and condition of Bloomington's indoor recreation facilities, as well as improvements needed to some of the neighborhood parks and athletic fields. Indoor facilities such as the Frank Southern Ice Arena, Alison-Jukebox Community Center, Banneker Community Center, and Bloomington Adult Community Center (BACC) are in need of major renovations or new buildings that are more functional for the activities and programs conducted in them.

Some of the types of recreation facilities that were identified by the community as desired for development include indoor programming spaces such as a walking/jogging track, weight/cardiovascular equipment, aerobics/fitness, and a leisure pool. The community also expressed a high need for the development of outdoor facilities including walking and biking trails, small neighborhood parks, natural areas, and additional skateboarding facilities.

It will be extremely important to prioritize these capital improvements and allocate funding to address these facility needs which most largely contribute to Bloomington's quality of life.

Recreation Programming and Special Events

Bloomington residents have a high need for youth and adult recreation programming, as well as special events, and the Farmers' Market. These activities contribute strongly to the high quality of life that residents have come to expect. Citizens identified that it is important to continue the wide variety of special events, movies in the park, lunch with the arts, concerts, and holiday related events to name a few. With limited resources, identifying the core services of the Department will be important to maintaining its high quality of programming.

Marketing and Communications

The Department has done a tremendous job of promoting the wide variety and high number of programs and facilities that it provides, despite decreases in marketing dollars over the past three years. In addition, the Department and community organizations provide so many activities and services for the community it is difficult for residents to keep track of all that is offered to them. Given these challenges, the Department must find additional creative means and mediums to continue to increase the public's knowledge of the recreation programs and services that the Department is providing.

Recommendations and Action Plans

Goal 1: MAXIMIZE THE PLANNING EFFORT

First Steps

Objective: Incorporate the action items of this plan into the City's annual work plans to achieve the recommendations of this plan and to enhance effectiveness of staff effort.

Strategies:

- Recommendation to City Council by Parks Board for adoption and implementation of the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan.
- Assign responsibility and time frame, and allocate resources necessary to complete each action identified in annual work plans.
- Coordinate Comprehensive Plan recommendations with other City Departments including the Planning Department.

Objective: Assure that all levels of staff are informed of and are set up to work together to implement the recommendations and strategies of the plan.

Strategies:

- Inform all levels of staff of the direction of the Plan, allow for staff input, encourage buy-in, and encourage input from all staff members.
- Provide cross-departmental staff teams/team members, as appropriate, with education development opportunities, necessary equipment, and supplies.

Goal 2: INCREASE TRADITIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES

Objective: Investigate Potential Traditional Funding Opportunities

The City has the ability to use these mechanisms to enhance the quality of life in Bloomington and expand recreation, park, open space, trails, programs, and services to the community. The survey indicated that fifty-seven percent (57%) of respondents are either very willing (23%) or somewhat willing (34%) to pay some increase in taxes to fund the types of parks, trails, recreation and sports facilities that are most important to their household.

Strategies:

- Work with the City's Administration to sustain adequate operating and maintenance funding to parks and recreation in order to sustain the level of service currently provided to the community and to avoid compounded maintenance and renovation costs.
- Reduce or eliminate the use of non-reverting funds for major capital improvement projects.
- Work with the City's Administration to sustain an adequate capital replacement fund for parks and recreation to be utilized as needed to upgrade and/or replace capital items.

- Work with residents and partners to establish additional revenue through a combination of the following sources to implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.
 - Allocation of existing City funds
 - Strategic Partnerships
 - Alternative Funding
 - Fees and Charges
 - Property and other Tax sources
 - Grants
 - Investigate support for an education campaign for a ballot initiative to pass a tax increase or bond referendum (in 2016) for future capital improvements.
 - Investigate the capital asset sales potential associated with selling the Bloomington Adult Community Center (BACC) and relocating the existing programs. (See *Goal 7*)
 - Utilize the revenue for renovation of an existing community facility or construction of a new multi-generational indoor community center facility.
 - Offset new building operation costs through leasing space and/or partnering with other community services agencies to share the cost of operating the facility.

Objective: Pursue Alternative Funding to Implement Recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan

Alternative funding methods may be instrumental in order to continue to operate the City's recreation programs and facilities at the level of service expected by the community. Continuing and expanding the allocation of resources to pursue alternative funding should be considered an investment in the future.

Strategies:

- Identify opportunities to increase community support and revenue opportunities such as grants, partnerships, sponsorships, volunteers and earned income (see *Appendix IX* for Alternative Funding Resources).
- Investigate the possibility of utilizing volunteer efforts or nominally paid students to apply for such funding (i.e. - SPEA Nonprofit Management Program or a retired Bloomington resident).
- Study the possibility of instituting a new Parks Impact Fee on new development and re-development, based on the relevant state law and a community-wide geographic LOS analysis of Parks facilities and services.
- Develop a "Capital Needs List" to identify philanthropic opportunities that align with these needs. Once identified, aggressively apply for grant funding (i.e. - cemetery operations funding through a historic organization.)
- Evaluate and update the existing Sponsorship agreement (see Sample Sponsorship Policy in *Appendix XI*) with equity agreements on an annual basis.
- Create an annual Sponsorship Manual listing all the opportunities for the year and distribute within the community in a menu format that creates a sense of urgency within the business community.

- Continue to increase the visibility and efforts of the Bloomington Community Park and Recreation Foundation to facilitate the receipt of grant funds and other fundraising activities, some of these might include:
 - Create an Annual Fund Program that identifies and creates a relationship with donors that will give to the organization on an annual basis.
 - Utilize a general direct mail campaign, with clear and consistent slogans for each type of funding it provides.
 - Propose different types of charitable giving to potential major donors including, monetary gifts, planned giving, bequests, or annuities.
 - Conduct an annual sponsor, donor event to thank those that donate to the Parks Foundation or parks department.
- Consider revising the existing Naming Rights Policy for parks, facilities, rooms, courts, trails etc. to capture additional revenue by selling naming rights.
- Establish additional partnerships to increasing funding and to gain in-kind donations of time and money (see *Goal 4* for additional information).

Goal 3: EVALUATE PRICING AND COST RECOVERY

Objective: Modify the Cost Recovery Philosophy and Policy

It is important for the Department to modify the **Pricing and Cost Recovery Philosophy** that reflects the values of the community and the responsibility it has to the community. This philosophy will be especially important if the Department moves forward in the development of new programs, additional and/or expanded facilities, and as it strives for sustainability and determines how much it is willing to subsidize operations.

One means of accomplishing this goal is by applying the **Pyramid Methodology**. This methodology develops and implements a refined cost recovery philosophy and pricing policy based on current “best practices” as determined by the mission of the agency and the program’s benefit to the community and/or individual.

Critical to this philosophical undertaking is the support and understanding of elected officials and ultimately citizens. Whether or not significant changes are called for, the agency wants to be certain that it is philosophically aligned with its residents. The development of the core services and cost recovery philosophy and policy is built on a very logical foundation, using the understanding of who is benefiting from a parks, recreation, and natural resources service to determine how the costs for that service should be paid. For an overview of the Pyramid Methodology, please review the contents in *Appendix VIII*.

Strategies:

- Develop ongoing systems that help measure cost recovery goals and anticipate potential pitfalls utilizing the following points:
 - Evaluate current revenue streams and their sustainability.
 - Track all expenses and revenues for all programs, facilities, and services to understand their contribution to overall department costs recovery.
 - Specifically analyze the costs associated with the delivery of all services.

- Analyze who is benefiting from programs, facilities, and services and to what degree they should be subsidized.
 - Consider the benefits of modifying the resident and non-resident fee system. Consider creating a resident discount with non-residents paying market rate for a marketable method of implementation.
- Consider eliminating membership fees to the Bloomington Adult Community Center (BACC) to spur an increase in participation.
- Fees for certain programs should acknowledge the full cost of each program (those direct and indirect costs associated with program delivery) and where the program fits on the scale of who benefits from the program of service to determine appropriate cost recovery target.
- Review and increase pricing structure to include the annual rate of inflation and rising commodity prices.
 - Define direct costs as those that are typically costs that exist purely because of the program and change with the program.
 - Define indirect costs as those that are typically costs that would exist anyway (like full time staff, utilities, administration, debt service, etc.)
 - Define ability to pay as an implementation concern to be addressed through the Department's scholarship program.

Objective: Increase Participation and Revenue from Current Services

Strategies:

- Utilize the marketing strategies in *Goal 9: Evaluate Marketing and Communications* to work to increase participation numbers and user fee revenue.
- Evaluate participation numbers of current programming.
 - Increase marketing to enhance participation in programs that are not currently at capacity.
- Reevaluate the provision of services of programs and activities that have a low cost recovery, are not core services, have a low demand and/or another service provider is providing effectively.
 - Consider getting out of services that fall into the above categories.

Goal 4: INCREASE PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

Objective: Collaborate to Attract More Residents and Visitors to Utilize and Participate in Bloomington's Park and Recreation Services and Facilities

Program and Service Strategies:

- Create new and formalize existing Partnerships (see Sample Partnership Policy in *Appendix X*) with equity agreements that are reviewed annually.
- Continue existing, and establish new, relationships with the following partner organizations to implement the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan, to identify duplicative services, and to provide high quality recreation programs, activities, and services:
- Local volunteers

- Create a “Park Ambassador” Program where residents living adjacent to parks are trained in inspecting parks and filling out a weekly status report for a nominal fee or pass which will also enhance safety in parks.
 - Explore the possibilities of revising and promoting an “Adopt-a-Park” Program to help with park maintenance, beautification, and civic pride.
- Youth sports associations
- Monroe County Community School Corporation
 - Strengthen existing and expand to establish new Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) with schools for increased use of multi-purpose fields, consistent gym times and days, and other department needs..
- Monroe County YMCA
- Sports Plex
- Monroe County Library
 - Consider expanding the partnership with the Monroe County Library for additional satellite sites, as opportunities arise.
- Bloomington Boys and Girls Club
- Big Brothers, Big Sisters
- Girls Inc.
- Rhinos
- Other organizations
 - Continue to increase partnerships with local medical and health organizations to increase fitness and health programming for the aging population within the community.
 - Consider expanding the partnership with Monroe County Parks and Recreation for future parks, shared maintenance, use of athletic fields, and other opportunities.
 - Work with the Bloomington Transit Authority to establish a “Recreation Rider” Program that provides discount passes for youth and seniors in need of transportation to and from City recreation facilities.
 - Continue to work with the Bloomington/Monroe County Convention and Visitors Bureau and other organizations to attract regional or national tournaments and special events that will act as economic engines for the community.
 - Work with local tourism organizations to provide activities such as environmental/wildlife education, tours to nearby attractions, historical tours, and ecotourism.

Facility Strategies:

- Initiate discussions with the University about partnership opportunities and use agreements for the future Indiana University Athletic Complex and existing University athletic and recreation facilities.
- Continue discussions with MCCSC for partnership opportunities when new schools are considered or facility renovations are proposed.
- Propose an update to the park-school joint use policy
- Create a Maintenance Adoption Program with local landscaping companies for small parcels.

- They maintain the park property to city standards which can be monitored with a small attractive sign “Maintained by _____” and their phone number. This is advertising for them and therefore tends to be properly maintained.
- Work with the Historical Society to assist in maintenance and funding of cemeteries and other historic assets.
- Create a partnership with golf user groups to fundraise for capital improvements and maintenance at the golf course.

Goal 5: ENSURE CONTINUED HIGH LEVEL OF SERVICE IN PARKS

GRASP® Map I: Recommendations

Please refer to this map, located in *Appendix VII*, for a graphic summary of the recommendations listed below

Objective: Budget adequate dollars to keep up with major maintenance and annual equipment replacement costs.

As shown in the GRASP® analysis, overall the City of Bloomington is doing a good job of providing a high level of service to the community. The Department has developed evaluation criteria that establish the need/priority for maintenance and equipment replacement. The criteria should be adhered to in order to ensure equitable maintenance and provision of parks facilities throughout the Bloomington system. The analysis shows that the quantity, quality and distribution of the service is high. Because of high LOS, capital improvements to outdoor recreation facilities are not the focus of this plan. However, in order to maintain this high standard of quality, the City should ensure that existing facilities continue to be maintained at the existing standard. If maintenance does not remain as a priority for the Department, the level of service to the community will fall to a level that is below expectations of the community. For example, a playground that is unusable due to lack of maintenance is the service equivalent to not having a playground at all.

Strategies:

- Continue with current playground replacement schedule.
 - Request \$90,000-\$100,000 per year in capital replacement dollars annually.
 - Prioritize playgrounds that are out-dated and do not meet current ADA and safety guidelines for replacement.
- Suggested playgrounds for priorities improvements for the next five years include (replacement costs taken from department CIP estimates):
 - Sherwood Oaks - \$60,000
 - Park Ridge - \$50,000
 - Park Ridge East - \$40,000
 - Crestmont Park - \$110,000
- Continue to update the department’s CIP.
 - Prioritize improvements to trails and parks in the eastern part of the community to address gaps in service. Historic department averages for the

last nine years show that an average of \$1.1 million annually is required for park and facility maintenance projects.

- Request \$200,000 per year in annual capital replacement dollars for department parking lots.
 - Note: If continued relationship with Public Works department is used to pave/maintain lots, this amount can be lowered.
- Budget an adequate amount for annual operations equipment replacement.
 - Historic averages over the last 8 years show that approximately \$58,000 per year is required to keep up with replacement needs.
- Budget an adequate amount for annual vehicle replacement.
 - Historic averages indicate that approximately \$86,000 per year is required to keep up with replacement needs. (This amount would replace approximately 10% of the department's vehicle fleet on an annual basis.)
- Budget adequate dollars for multiuse trail maintenance.
 - National averages for trail maintenance range from \$10,000 - \$12,000 per mile. The Department should budget annual dollars in this range for trail maintenance to ensure quality trails for users.
- Track actual trail maintenance costs to determine actual department costs. By tracking trail maintenance costs separately from other maintenance activities, the Department can more accurately predict and budget for trail maintenance costs. Because the City's trail system is in its infancy, these early numbers can be essential in planning the growing system.
- Coordinate with public works to bring multi-use trails and side-paths that are maintained by public works up to Parks standards to ensure consistency in trail construction and maintenance throughout the system.
 - Prioritize the Park Ridge/10th Street Trail for coordination and improvement.
- Increase park maintenance by partnering with neighborhood groups for volunteer clean-up days.
- Consider expansion of adopt a trail program.

Goal 6: INCREASE LEVEL OF SERVICE FOR PARKS AND TRAILS

The Level of Service (LOS) for park facilities that is being provided to the community is high as stated in the description of the LOS in section IV. Based on the high level of service throughout Bloomington, this plan recommends that the focus of the department in the next five years be on increasing LOS in the areas of trails and walkable access. The Objectives provided below provide guidance for increasing LOS for these two key areas.

The *GRASP*® method of identifying the Level of Service simply determines the collective access to each park and recreational component for each household in Bloomington. Increasing connectivity throughout the community to these amenities will increase the Level of Service to more households.

GRASP® Perspective J: Neighborhood Access to Proposed Trail System

This perspective shows the LOS that will be provided to the community if the current plan for trails is realized. Proposed trails and side paths that are shown on this plan were taken from the most current Alternative Transportation and Greenways plan and reflect the

portions of that plan that provide recreational value to Bloomington. In showing side-paths as well as multi-use trails, it is understood that the Parks and Recreation Department will have to partner with the Public Works and Planning Departments to help provide this LOS. If this plan is realized the LOS for trails in the community will be increased significantly.

Table 1: GRASP® Perspective J Overall Statistics

Total Acres (includes non-Parks & Rec. properties in the community)	15,000.8
Acres with LOS	13734
Percent Total with LOS	92%
Average LOS per Acre Served	38.5

Table 2: Acres and Percentages Addressing the Needs of Bloomington in terms of trails

Ranking	Acres
Acres with no LOS	1266.6
Acres Below Expectations	5339.4
Acres Meeting Expectations	5242.5
Acres Exceeding Expectations	3152.4
Ranking	Percentage
Percent Total Area with no LOS	8%
Percent Area Below Expectations	36%
Percent Area Meeting Expectations	35%
Percent Area Exceeding Expectations	21%

Objective: Increase level of service trails provide to residents

Strategies:

- Work with the City planning and other departments to accomplish goals as established by the City's most current Alternative Transportation and Greenways System Plan.
- Add bicycle parking at all park access points, prioritizing parks that connect to side paths, multi-use trails, or greenway trails.
- Make connectivity a priority in trail construction in the City's Trail system. Coordinate with the Planning department and Public Works to provide bike and pedestrian connections to:
 - Existing multiuse trails and greenways
 - Parks
 - Recreation facilities
 - Indiana University
 - Other city services and businesses
- Work with other City Departments to develop future phases of the B-Line Trail and the Jackson Creek Trail.
- As outlined in the Alternative Transportation and Greenways System Plan, prioritize land acquisition for trail development. Coordinate this effort to include other City departments.

- Prioritize trail construction and land acquisitions that provide recreational trail access and connections to other recreational facilities such as parks and community centers.

Objective: Increase access to parks and recreation facilities.

Strategies:

- Strive to provide parks within one third mile of residents to increase walkability.
- Work with the City Council, Administration and Planning and Public Works departments to provide safe and enjoyable sidewalks or sidepaths as routes to parks.
- Improve partnership and communication with the county to increase access to Monroe County fields.
- Look for opportunities to partner with the University to provide parks near the campus and for students.

Objective: To meet the needs of the current and growing community, increase park acreage in expanding areas and as opportunities arise.

Strategies:

- Take advantage of the opportunity to acquire the “switchyard” property on the south end of the B-Line Trail to increase community open space acreage.
 - Prioritize uses for this acquisition to align with the desired uses as identified in the user survey, including increased natural areas, trails, and nature centers.
 - Consider creating a site plan for the switchyard property when it is acquired.
- Create a Master Plan for the newly acquired Goat Farm Property to respond to the highest needs of the community.
 - Use public process and the most recent public survey to determine development priorities. At the time of this plan increased natural areas, trails, and nature centers were among the most desired components.
- Watch for land acquisitions in the far eastern periphery of the corporate boundaries of the community and around city edges and downtown to fill in gaps in service in growing areas.
- Explore possible acquisition of land beyond city limits to further extend trail systems outside of the community.

Goal 7: INCREASE LEVEL OF SERVICE FOR INDOOR RECREATION SERVICES

Objective: Increase level of service investments for existing indoor facilities

Strategies:

- Make improvements to Frank Southern Ice Arena. Inventory assessments and public input indicate that several improvements can be made to the Frank Southern Ice Arena that would greatly increase the functionality and usability of this facility. The following things have been identified by the City as a part of the CIP budget (as yet unfunded) for improvements:
 - Locker room ventilation – \$8,000

- Replace gutter and downspouts \$12,000
 - Acrylic Dasher Board System, \$120,000
 - Arena Insulation, \$30,000
- Other things that need to be addressed at Frank Southern include:
 - Locker room improvements
 - New benches, \$3,000
 - Shower updates, \$3,000
 - New flooring and wall covering in showers, \$9,000
 - Improved daily janitorial maintenance

Objective: Optimize indoor recreation facilities and services to take advantage of potential partnerships and current facilities.

Strategies:

- Consider selling the BACC building to fund the relocation of senior services to a more appropriate facility.
- Continue conversations and negotiations with the School district about future shared use opportunities through a partnership arrangement.
- Explore the possibility of renovation of an existing facility or acquisition of a multigenerational, multiuse community center that could house the BACC activities as well as those of other recreation service providers. Other recreation services agencies could also contribute money toward this potential collaboration from capital asset sales of their existing buildings.
- Consider using the Allison-Jukebox building for other uses.
- Continue to look for facility donors to provide (or purchase) the city with existing facilities or funding for facilities that would provide indoor recreation components that were identified as having a high need by the public including fitness, aquatics, gyms, and community spaces.
 - The Sports Plex is a 100,000 square foot facility that could serve the city as a recreation center. The Allison-Jukebox activities could be moved to this type of facility which would be a vast improvement over the current facility. If necessary, the City could consider utilizing a bond referendum in 2016 to fund this need.
- An indoor aquatic center could be included in a bond referendum (if feasible at that time) and added to an existing recreation center.

Goal 8: EVALUATE PROGRAMMING AND COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

Objective: Strategically meet the community's demand for new programs and services

Provide a variety of recreational opportunities to meet the various needs of the community; and expand recreation program offerings to meet the changing needs of the community.

Strategies:

- Allocate resources and initiate collaborations to provide quality recreation programming, based on community input.

- Identify core service areas and any programs or activities that are duplicating the services of other organizations.
- Continue to gain information from the community as to what programs are desired and popular through post-program and event evaluations and a statistically-valid survey, at minimum every five years.
- Expand fitness and wellness programs for the entire community, with a focus on aquatics, youth, and older adult programs and opportunities.
- Provide more active recreation opportunities for Baby Boomers.
- Provide more drop-in and one-time programs and activities
- Provide more fitness programs for youth to fight the obesity epidemic.
- Provide more adult lap swim time at pools.
- Provide additional health and wellness programs like yoga, Pilates, and aerobics.
- Increase programming through the use of Monroe County school facilities, by working to increase and strengthen the partnership agreement with the MCCSC. (See *Goal 4* for additional information).

Objective: Establish and promote more special events in Bloomington

Strategies:

- Establish a streamlined community special events plan through collaborative efforts between all City of Bloomington departments and agencies, community partners, and organizations, anchored to common goals. The Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department should seek internal city departmental and community involvement to combine resources for city-wide special events. Many BPRD resources are utilized for community special events and the citizens would like to see more events. Multiple community agencies should contribute resources to these events with a community event committee established for each.
- Investigate the community interest, agency budget capacity, and partnership opportunities for creating additional community special events, to meet the high demand that is illustrated through the Bloomington Citizen Attitude and Interest Survey.
- Work to establish more community special events in lower-income areas of town, such as Butler and Crestmont Parks.
- Coordinate strategic fee-based activities (i.e. - concerts, festivals, etc.) with University events (i.e. - football, basketball, graduation, etc.) to increase participation and revenue. The BPRD can schedule additional events along with or during the same time as University events that will capitalize on the additional IU event attendees in town.

Objective: Evaluate community-wide pre-school, youth and teen program market along with other service providers to determine unmet needs and Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department's role to fill the service gaps.

Provide pre-school, youth and teen recreational opportunities to meet the determined needs of the community; and create recreation program offerings to meet the changing needs of the youth in the community.

Strategies:

- Initiate collaborations with other social service providers to determine the service gaps within Bloomington and provide quality recreation programming for pre-school, youth and teens, based on community input. Low income youth and teens should be a focus point for determining the target markets for each social service agency as well as the service gaps and what programs will be offered by which agency.
- Identify the core service areas for BPRD and discontinue any programs or activities that are duplicating the services of other organizations serving the pre-school, youth and teen market.
- Continue to gain information from the community as to what pre-school, youth and teen programs are desired and popular through post-program and event evaluations and a statistically-valid survey, at minimum every five years.

Goal 9: EVALUATE MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS PRACTICES

***Objective:* Increase awareness and feedback about Park and Recreation offerings to the public.**

Strategies:

- Continue to utilize evaluations and annual in-house benchmarking program to solicit participant feedback and drive programming efforts.
- Continue to collect feedback data that supports the expressed desire for trends and improvements to programs and activities.
- Create a “Mystery Shopper” program where secret shoppers evaluate services anonymously and results are tracked.
- Develop an evaluation process for marketing media such as newspaper, seasonal brochures, website, direct mail, targeted e-mails, radio, and television advertising to continuously determine effectiveness of marketing dollars.
- Create seamless product delivery for park and recreation services that delivers from a consumer vantage.
- Increase promotion and potentially incentives to attract seasonal staff.

***Objective:* Create a seamless and cohesive customer service delivery system for the provision of all park and recreation programs and services regardless of the location.**

Strategies:

- Network the registration system into all Park and Recreation facilities and on the website for ease of registration for patrons.
 - Upgrade existing RecTrac program to the web based version.
- Develop a comprehensive cross training program for all staff and instructors including knowledge of all program areas as well as customer service.
- Use program tracking and evaluation tools to capacity by designing reports to readily identify life cycles of programs, identify programs not meeting minimum capacity (review all program minimums for cost effectiveness), identify waiting lists, etc.

Recommendation Cost Estimates and Timelines

The following table includes capital projects and additional items that significantly impact the annual operational and maintenance budgets. The table is also an implementation schedule with priorities listed in timeframes. The items within each timeframe are not listed in a precise priority order and should be implemented as resources allow or based on immediate needs that may change from year to year. All cost estimates are in 2007 figures. Funding sources listed are suggested methods of funding and can be enhanced with additional methods of funding. Overall staffing cost projections are included in the annual operational and maintenance cost estimates.

Table 3: Recommendation 2008-2013 Priorities

RECOMMENDATION 2008-2013 Priorities	CAPITAL COST ESTIMATE	CAPITAL FUNDING SOURCES	ANNUAL OPERATIONAL & MAINTENANCE COST ESTIMATE <i>(including overall staffing projections)</i>	O/M FUNDING SOURCES
Playground replacement (as listed in Goal 5)	\$400,000	General Fund, Partnerships, Donations, Grants	N/A	General Fund
Additional Bicycle Parking (3 parks, see Recommendations Map <i>Appendix VII</i>)	\$15,000	General Fund	\$300	General Fund
Renovate an existing building / school into Multigenerational Community Center	\$1,500,000	Capital Asset Sales, General Fund or Bond Issue	\$150,000	General Fund
Purchase "Switchyard" property	\$1,000,000	General Fund	N/A	N/A
Develop remaining phases, 2-4, of B-Line Trail	\$5,000,000	Grants, General Fund, TIF Funds, Greenways	\$12,000 per mile	General Fund
Develop Jackson Creek Trail, Phases 1-6	\$5,300,000	Grants	\$12,000 per mile	General Fund, TIF Funds
Create a Master Plan for Goat Farm Park	\$60,000	General Fund	N/A	N/A
Feasibility Study to determine use of "Switchyard" property	\$100,000	General Fund	N/A	N/A

RECOMMENDATION 2008-2013 Priorities	CAPITAL COST ESTIMATE	CAPITAL FUNDING SOURCES	ANNUAL OPERATIONAL & MAINTENANCE COST ESTIMATE <i>(including overall staffing projections)</i>	O/M FUNDING SOURCES
Upgrade Frank Southern Ice Arena	\$250,000	General Fund/Grants/ Donations	N/A	N/A
Total 2008-2013 CIP	\$13,625,000			

Table 4: Recommendation 2014-2018 Priorities

RECOMMENDATION 2014-2018 Priorities	CAPITAL COST ESTIMATE	CAPITAL FUNDING SOURCES	ANNUAL OPERATIONAL & MAINTENANCE COST ESTIMATE	O/M FUNDING SOURCES
Playground replacement (4 parks as listed in Department Playground replacement schedule)	\$400,000	General Fund, Partnerships, Donations, Grants	N/A	General Fund
Outdoor Aquatic Facilities Study	\$50,000	General Fund	N/A	N/A
Develop Jackson Creek Trail, Phase 7	\$2,200,000	Grants	\$12,000 per mile	General Fund
Buy or build Recreation Center	\$5,000,000	Bonds	\$400,000	General Fund
Indoor Aquatic Center (if feasible)	\$6,000,000	Bonds	\$200,000	General Fund
Total 2014-2018 CIP	\$13,650,000			
Total 10 YEAR CIP (in 2007 dollars)	\$27,275,000			